

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An article of footwear comprising:
an outsole,
a midsole attached to the outsole,
an upper attached to the midsole,
a fluid-filled bladder located between the outsole and the upper, the bladder having a first surface, a second surface, and a side wall joining the first and second surfaces, and
a cage defining a base, a plurality of spaced apart ribs, and a reinforcing rib, the plurality of ribs extending outwardly from the base and along the side wall of the bladder from the first surface to the second surface of the bladder, the plurality of spaced apart ribs joined together by the reinforcing rim, whereby the plurality of ribs provide support to the side wall of the bladder.
2. The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein each of the plurality of ribs defines a gusset connected to the base.
3. The article of footwear of claim 2 wherein the base extends across either of the first or second surface of the bladder.
4. The article of footwear of claim 3 wherein the bladder is located in the midsole.
5. The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein at least one of the spaced apart ribs defines a first end and a second end, the first end attached to the base, and wherein the first end and second end define a thickness, the thickness of the first end being greater than the thickness of the second end.

6. The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein at least one of the spaced apart ribs defines a first end, a second end, and a middle portion between the first and second ends, and wherein the first end, second end and middle portion define a thickness, the thickness of the middle portion being greater than the thickness of the first or second ends.

7. The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein the base is a solid plate.

8. The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein the base is a solid plate having at least one opening extending through the solid plate.

9. The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein the base, the reinforcing rib, and the plurality of ribs define a plurality of openings, the bladder being visible through the plurality of openings.

10. The article of footwear of claim 1 wherein the bladder defines a periphery, the plurality of ribs positioned and spaced apart around the periphery of the bladder.

11. The article of footwear of claim 10 wherein the plurality of ribs are flexible and resilient.

12. An article of footwear comprising:
an outsole,
an upper positioned above the outsole,
a fluid-filled bladder located between the outsole and the upper, the bladder having a first surface, a second surface, and a side wall joining the first and second surfaces, and
a cage defining a base, a plurality of spaced apart ribs, and a reinforcing rib, the plurality of ribs extending outwardly from the base and along the side wall of the bladder from the first surface to the second surface of the bladder, the bladder being visible through the spaced apart ribs, the plurality of spaced apart ribs joined together by the reinforcing rim, whereby the plurality of ribs provide support to the side wall of the bladder.

13. The article of footwear of claim 12 wherein each of the plurality of ribs defines a gusset connected to the base.
14. The article of footwear of claim 13 wherein the base extends across either of the first or second surface of the bladder.
15. The article of footwear of claim 14 wherein the cage is positioned between the upper and the outsole.
16. The article of footwear of claim 12 wherein at least one of the spaced apart ribs defines a first end and a second end, the first end attached to the base, and wherein the first end and second end define a thickness, the thickness of the first end being greater than the thickness of the second end.
17. The article of footwear of claim 12 wherein at least one of the spaced apart ribs defines a first end, a second end, and a middle portion between the first and second ends, and wherein the first end, second end and middle portion define a thickness, the thickness of the middle portion being greater than the thickness of the first or second ends.
18. The article of footwear of claim 12 wherein the base is a solid plate.
19. The article of footwear of claim 12 wherein the base is a solid plate having at least one opening extending through the solid plate.
20. The article of footwear of claim 12 wherein the base, the reinforcing rib, and the plurality of ribs define a plurality of openings, the bladder being visible through the plurality of openings.

21. The article of footwear of claim 12 wherein the bladder defines a periphery, the plurality of ribs positioned and spaced apart around the periphery of the bladder.

22. The article of footwear of claim 21 wherein the plurality of ribs are flexible and resilient.

23. An article of footwear comprising:
an outsole,
an upper positioned above the outsole,
a fluid-filled bladder located between the outsole and the upper, the bladder having opposing surfaces and a side wall joining the opposing surfaces, the bladder defining a periphery, and
a bladder support device defining a plurality of spaced apart support members and at least one reinforcing rib joining the plurality of spaced apart support members, the plurality of spaced apart support members extending outwardly from the reinforcing rib, along the side wall of the bladder, and around the periphery of the bladder, the bladder being visible through the spaced apart support members.

24. The article of footwear of claim 23 wherein each of the plurality of support members defines a gusset connected to the reinforcing rib.

25. The article of footwear of claim 23 wherein the bladder support device further defines a base.

26. The article of footwear of claim 23 wherein the bladder support device is positioned between the upper and the outsole.

27. The article of footwear of claim 25 wherein at least one of the spaced apart support members defines a first end and a second end, the first end attached to the base, and

wherein the first end and second end define a thickness, the thickness of the first end being greater than the thickness of the second end.

28. The article of footwear of claim 25 wherein at least one of the spaced apart support members defines a first end, a second end, and a middle portion between the first and second ends, and wherein the first end, second end and middle portion define a thickness, the thickness of the middle portion being greater than the thickness of the first or second ends.

29. The article of footwear of claim 25 wherein the base is a solid plate.

30. The article of footwear of claim 25 wherein the base, the reinforcing rib, and the plurality of support members define a plurality of openings, the bladder being visible through the plurality of openings.

31. The article of footwear of claim 23 wherein the plurality of support members are flexible and resilient.